

Compulsory Attendance

Jones County School authorities, in cooperation with other county agencies and courts, shall enforce the Georgia Compulsory Attendance Law, O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1, Mandatory Attendance, which requires every parent, guardian, or other person residing in the state having control of any such age child or children between the ages of 6 and 16 enroll and send such child or children to school. Further, all children enrolled for 20 school days or more in the public schools of Jones County before their SIXTH birthday shall become subject to all provisions of the law. All students missing more than 5 unexcused days in Georgia are declared as truant by the law.

Jones County Student Attendance Protocol

Level 1: 2 Unexcused Absences – Parent/guardian will be contacted via email, phone call, or letter.

Level 2: 5 Unexcused Absences – Principal's designee will request for the parent/guardian to sign an Attendance Contract.

Level 3: 10 Unexcused Absences –

- For students in elementary school, the Principal's designee will schedule a Children in Need of Services (CHINS) Attendance Review Meeting with the student's parent/guardian and CHINS committee.
- For compulsory age middle/high school students, a CHINS Attendance Review meeting with the student's parent/guardian and CHINS committee is held at the Jones County Board of Education.

Level 4: If the student accrues additional unexcused absences after the CHINS meeting, charges will be filed with the appropriate court(s).

Any parent, guardian, or other person residing in Georgia who has control or charge of a child or children and who violates O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1 shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction thereof, shall be subject to:

- *A fine not less than \$25.00 and not greater than \$100.00,*
- *Imprisonment not to exceed 30 days,*
- *Community service, or*
- *Any combination of such penalties, at the discretion of the court having jurisdiction.*

Excused and Unexcused Absences

Absence from school is classified as either excused or unexcused. Reasons established by the Georgia Board of Education as excused absences are outlined in this policy. Students may be temporarily excused from school when:

1. Personally ill and when attendance in school would endanger their health or the health of others.
2. A serious illness or death occurs in their immediate family.
3. Mandated by order of governmental agencies, including pre-induction physical examinations for service in the armed forces, or by court order.
4. Celebrating religious holidays observed by their faith.
5. Registering to vote or voting for a period not to exceed one day.

Students should present a written excuse within two (2) days after an absence. Failure to present an excuse will result in the absence(s) remaining unexcused.

Upon returning to school, students should complete makeup work within five (5) school days. Parents may pick up homework assignments in the school office.

The items listed below should be included in each written, emailed, or faxed excuse.

1. Date the excuse is written
2. Date and day of the absence
3. Reason for absence
4. Signature of parent/guardian

COVID-19 Related Absences

- When a student must isolate or quarantine, the absence will be marked **excused** for the missed day(s).
- If a student must isolate or quarantine and works remotely, the student will be marked **present** for the missed day(s).

Excessive Excused Absences

A parent/guardian note for a student's illness-related absence is only valid for five (5) days per semester. After a student exceeds five days within a semester, a doctor's note is required to excuse the student's absence(s). The Principal and Executive Director of Student Services retain the right to excuse absences on an individual basis.

Tardy/Early Dismissal

Tardy is defined as a student not being in the classroom when the class is scheduled to begin. Early dismissal is defined as a student leaving school before the ringing of the last bell.

1. Parent/Guardian must follow the same process to excuse (personal illness, illness in the immediate family, death in the family, religious holidays, or court order) an early dismissal or tardy as they do to excuse an absence.
2. Each school will develop interventions to address excessive tardiness. Non-attendance for instructional activities is established by tardiness, early sign-outs, or absences for all or any part of the school day.
3. Principals have the discretion to excuse tardiness for extenuating circumstances.

Medical Appointments

Parents are requested to make dental, medical, and other appointments for students after school hours, on weekends, or during school holidays. For an absence to count as excused, students must submit a legitimate excuse within two days of returning to school. Failure to do so will result in the absence(s) remaining unexcused.